



June 12, 2012

Colleagues,

We are about to draw to a close the 82nd academic year of our University. In a few days time, we will bestow the rights and privileges of a college degree to 684 individuals who have chosen to complete their studies at EOU. This is, in many respects, symbolic of our efforts as educators and members of an academic community and I want to take this moment to thank you for your dedication and efforts in supporting our University.

At our opening session this year, I referenced a quote from President Frank Bennett when he welcomed students to Eastern in 1963. He stated:

This morning we are grateful for our college, and for the unusual opportunities it offers us, for the privileges of growth and development it presents to us...

As students at Eastern Oregon College grant us readiness of mind for self-discipline and control. May our thoughts and ideals match the opportunities during our stay on this campus. Bless our parents and loved ones who have sacrificed through the years that we may have the best in life, and may our coming to college and our achievements here in some measure mark the fulfillment of their dreams for us.

Bless those who teach and work at this college. May they have the consciousness that they are potent helpers of all that is proper and good in life. May they be strengthened by the faith that they, together, are critical in assisting us to grow and develop to the very best of our abilities and capacities.

At this Fall Convocation our faith is that faculty, staff and students may work together, play together, learn together and grow in knowledge and intellectual and spiritual stature together.

His words and insights clearly articulate EOU's core value and guiding principle of a sense of community and shared responsibility in serving our mission of educating students and enabling them to fulfill their dreams. This same core value continues to thrive and guide us today and is the basis for working together toward common goals and aspirations. We know that when we perform our individual duties and roles—be it as a faculty member, an

adviser, a groundskeeper, a coach, etc.—that it is through the combination of all of our efforts that we enable our students to attain their educational goals and to succeed in their professional and personal lives.

Recently, when we recognized many of our retiring faculty and staff, distinguished administrative faculty and teaching faculty recipients and outstanding staff members, this core value of community and commitment to our students and their success was reiterated by each of the presenters and nominees. The significance of the collegiality that exists in our University was told through many anecdotes, as well as overt statements from retirees indicating that what they will miss most are their colleagues and friends throughout this University. Additionally, each person spoke of the great pride they feel when they continually receive notes and updates from former students about the progress and successes they have experienced since leaving Eastern, and how their educational involvement enabled them to overcome significant challenges and seize new opportunities.

I saw this firsthand during my “Student for a Day” experience. During my 14 hours as a student, I witnessed the passion of our professors inside and outside the classroom to ensure student success. Due to a student’s mishap, I saw members of our grounds crew jump into action and go out of their way to assist him when they could have easily said, “not my job.” I saw our administrative faculty and classified staff members assist and work with students, in preventing problems and in offering encouraging words and advice, in multiple ways that we all may not notice due to our own busy schedules.

Undoubtedly, EOU is about our community and the support that we give one another.

As we prepare to close our academic year, we look to the future. As noted earlier, we are in the midst of many icons retiring from Eastern. These members of our community, individually and collectively, have made an indelible impression on our great University. As they look to their own new horizons, I know that it is with a sense of pride that they realize those who come after them will build on their work and passion and take EOU even further than they did. We acknowledge and honor that they have bestowed us with a clear pathway for our journey and efforts to carry on the Eastern spirit through our remaining faculty and staff members, and those who we invite into our community, who share in this great sense of purpose and community and have an unyielding passion for educating and supporting our students. It is my commitment to continue to foster an administrative team and leadership style that focuses on supporting the teaching and learning aspects of our University and fortifies the historic foundation of EOU’s principles. This is crucial to maintaining our never-ending pursuit of support in our assembly of faculty and staff who are committed to serving our students and the region in the creation, dissemination and application of knowledge.

Earlier this year, David Gilbert, who served as Eastern’s seventh president, passed away. For those that knew David, he took special care and attention to create a campus community for our students, faculty and staff. He also was diligent in his efforts to engage the communities we serve with our University. He was passionate about having Eastern focus on its regional mission and creating opportunities for people to gather and learn from

one another. He called it the “strategy of entanglement,” meaning that we all needed to work together for common causes and support each other in many and varied ways. Following his passing, I asked Tim Seydel to convene a group consisting of several current and former faculty and staff members (Greg Monahan, Dixie Lund, Doyle Slater, Dick Hermens and James Lundy) to discuss and present me with the most appropriate way to commemorate, memorialize and honor Dave’s impact on Eastern and our community. This group gathered information from many sources and constituents to garner ideas and proposals for naming one of our campus buildings in his honor, (these ranged from scientific labs, to the KEOL Radio Station, Alumni Room, rooms in Hoke, Quinn, Badgley, Inlow, a residential hall and many other ideas). In the end, this group of loyal EOU members recommended that the most appropriate way to recognize Dave and highlight Eastern’s commitment to community is to rename the newly remodeled Ackerman Gymnasium as the “David E. Gilbert Center” with the intent that it will host important University and community events. I support this recommendation wholeheartedly and we will officially announce and open the Gilbert Center in the fall term.

President Gilbert, President Bennett and the hundreds of former faculty and staff members would be proud to know, that we, as a community, have the same sense of commitment they initiated and are fostering in our four core themes which are: an exceptional commitment to providing quality academic programs; providing an educational experience that is both affordable and accessible; partnering with the region for economic and cultural growth; and remaining student centered. Our dedication to Eastern through these four themes will enable students to fulfill their dreams, to learn to think and to apply principles to new circumstances and situations, and to achieve a great society that will serve all of us now and into the future.

This 82nd academic year was extremely successful in many ways, thanks to you and your efforts. As it nears completion, I hope that each of you is able to reflect on our many accomplishments and take stock in what we have achieved. I also hope, in the upcoming months, that you will be able to visit with family and friends, find some time to relax and recharge, as well as enjoy the various community celebrations that occur during the summer—maybe even participate in one of the regional parades!

Thank you all for your dedication to EOU and our students. I am honored to be a member of our community and call Eastern Oregon University home.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be the name 'Bob' written in a stylized, cursive script.

Bob